

REMARKS

The Applicants thank the Examiner for the thorough consideration given the present application. Claim 11 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein. Claims 1-10 and 12-17 are pending. Claims 1-3, 9, 10, and 12-14 are amended, and dependent claims 15-17 are added. Claims 1 and 9 are independent. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks set forth herein.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph

Claims 12-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph as being indefinite. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In order to overcome this rejection, Applicants have amended claim 12 to correct the deficiency specifically pointed out by the Examiner.

Applicants respectfully submit that the claims, as amended, particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-5, 9 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Garvey, III et al. (U.S. 5,656,767), and claims 6-8, 10, 11, 13, and 14 stand rejected

under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Garvey, III et al. in view of Yamagishi et al. (U.S.5,331,287).

These rejections are respectfully traversed.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to advance the prosecution of the present application, claim 1 is amended herein to recite a combination of method steps directed to a method of measuring water content of a liquid, including

electrically measuring properties of the liquid at least substantially simultaneously and repeatedly by an absolute-value measurement method in order to determine a dielectric coefficient of the liquid, and by a direct relative-value measurement method in order to determine a relative water content of the liquid.

Further, independent claim 9 is amended herein to recite a combination of elements directed to an apparatus for measuring water content of a liquid, including

first electrical sensor means for measuring an absolute water content of the liquid being sensitive to changes in a dielectric coefficient;

second electrical sensor means for directly measuring a relative water content of the liquid; and

means for controlling the first and the second electrical sensor means such that the properties of the liquid are electrically measured at least substantially simultaneously and repeatedly.

Support for first electrical sensor means for measuring an absolute water content of the liquid being sensitive to changes in a dielectric coefficient; second electrical sensor means for directly measuring a relative water content of the liquid; and means for controlling the first and the second electrical sensor means such that the properties of the liquid are electrically measured at least substantially simultaneously and repeatedly, can be found in the original specification, for example on page 7, line 7, page 7, lines 25-27, and page 9, lines 28-31. See also Fig. 1 which shows electrodes 5 and 6 of the first and the second sensor means.

The Applicants respectfully submit that the combination of method steps and elements as set forth in independent claims 1 and 9, respectively, are not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including, Garvey, III et al. For example, Garvey, III et al. merely disclose an absolute value measurement, and fail to even hint at a means or a method for performing a direct relative value measurement, as set forth in the present invention.

Thus, at least for the reasons stated above, the Applicants respectfully submit that the combinations of method steps and elements as set forth in independent claims 1 and 9 are not disclosed or made obvious by the prior art of record, including, Garvey, III et al.

In view of the amendments and arguments described above, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) are respectfully requested. Independent claims 1 and 9 are in condition for allowance.

The Examiner is advised that dependent claims 2, 3, 10, and 12 are amended and claims 15-17 are added to set forth additional novel aspects of the present invention.

Dependent claims 2-8 and 10-17 are in condition for allowance due to their dependence on allowable independent claims, or due the additional novel features contained therein.

Therefore, all claims of the present application are in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, he is invited to telephone Carl T. Thomsen (Reg. No. 50,786) at (703) 205-8000.

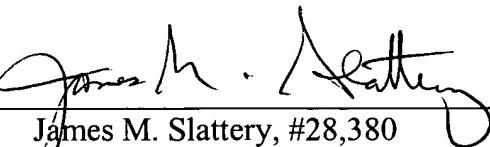
Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.17 and 1.136(a), Applicants respectfully petition for a two (2) month extension of time for filing a reply in connection with the present application, and the required fee of \$420 is attached hereto.

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Amendment dated April 22, 2004
Reply to Office Action of December 3, 2003

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If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17, particularly extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,
BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

By 
James M. Slattery, #28,380
P. O. Box 747
Falls Church, VA 22040-0747
(703) 205-8000

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